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AN
ANSWER
TO
A PIECE,
ENTITLED,
“An APPEAL
TO THE
IMPARTIAL PUBLIC,
By an ASSOCIATION,”

CALLING THEMSELVES

“*Christian Independents, in Gloucester.*”

Gloucester, Mass., C. 3. in

MASSACHUSETTS:

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MDCCCLXXXV.

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THE S.W.E.R.

A. F. I. C. E.

AN. A. F. I. C. E.



By the Association

Christianity



An ANSWER, &c.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

WE should not have troubled the publick, or taken any farther notice of the Appeal of those who call themselves *Christian Independents* in *Glocester*, than to have read it with an eye of candour, had they not grossly misrepresented the truth, and in several instances asserted things really false, with a design (we fear) of imposing upon the publick, and prejudicing their minds against the truth. We shall therefore,

1st, Give a fair and impartial relation of facts, as they took place, and gave rise to that Association who now stile themselves *Christian Independents*.

2dly, We shall make a few remarks upon their Appeal.

3dly, Close with a short address to the publick.

THE RELATION OF FACTS.

SOMETIME in the year 1774, the Rev. Mr. Samuel Chandler, the then pastor of the first church and parish in *Glocester*, fell into a decline, and was not able to carry on the work of the ministry. The committee for supplying the pulpit was informed that there was one Mr. Murray, in Boston, who came from the southward, and that he was a wonderful preacher, and urged them to send for him; but the committee thought it not prudent to send for a stranger, without something more to recommend him, than what they learnt from their informers. However, he soon came; we suppose, by the invitation of his private friends; and being introduced by them to Mr. Chandler, he went into a free, candid and friendly conversation with him, upon the subject of his education, and the manner of his being introduced into the work of the ministry; and he freely told him, though he had not been favoured with a liberal education, yet this was more than made up, by an extraordinary call from *Heaven*; and went on to convince Mr. Chandler of the justness of his claim to this extraordinary

nary call. However, Mr. Chandler was by no means satisfied; yet, as there was a sacramental lecture already appointed—the people in general very desirous of hearing this stranger—and Mr. Chandler not being able to preach himself—consented that he should preach in his pulpit. Soon after he named his text, he told us, that as he was a stranger he was at a loss what to entertain us with; but, desirous of being directed, both his text and subject were revealed to him as he came along: so he gave us a sacramental discourse (as he called it) warm from the fountain of inspiration; and, in his way, recommended to us frequent communion at the Lord's table. In his whole preachment he was very incoherent, and threw out some dark and mystical things, which had a very different effect upon the hearers:—some admired him, and swallowed all he said, with great avidity; others doubted, and returned and searched the Scriptures, “to see if the things which had been spoken were so”; others were filled with indignation, and said they had been imposed upon; but the majority were for hearing him farther. At length he opened his whole sentiments, and roundly exploded the doctrine of future rewards and punishments—asserting the doctrine of universal salvation, without exception or distinction of characters—openly ridiculing the distinguishing doctrines of the gospel, as generally preached by the regular ministers of this land, whom he spoke of in the most contemptuous manner, as being a group of poor ignorant creatures, who knew nothing of the gospel of Christ—and said, “they were, like the horse in the mill, confined to a narrow circle, from whence they could not depart.” This, with many other things he said in publick, in the run of his discourse, satisfied the doubtful, and for a while stumbled even his admirers; and the meeting-house doors were shut against him. Soon after this, Mr. Chandler, viewing himself approaching fast to the close of life, sent for him, and entered fully with him on the subject of universal salvation; when he asserted it in the strongest terms; and being asked, whether there was no exception, he said, no. Upon Judas, the traitor, being mentioned, he said, “he doubted not but he was now on a throne of glory, and that he shone as bright as any of the apostles.” And when the tares among the wheat in the field were mentioned, (represented by our Saviour in a para-
ble

ble as being gathered together in bundles to be burned, implying future punishment) he said, those tares were the sins and evil dispositions of the human heart, which were punished in their principal, the Devil, separate from the subject who committed them: and many other such like strange and incoherent things were advanced by him in this conference. Mr. Chandler said but little, for he had but little strength; yet gave him, in most affecting and melting strains, his dying admonition—endeavouring to dissuade him from those strange and absurd tenets—but, if he should continue to advance them, not to do it here, to corrupt and mislead the dear people of his charge. After this, Mr. Chandler, for the last time, got, with much difficulty, into his own desk, where he took an affecting leave of his people, solemnly warning them not to hear this false and dangerous man, in the following words.—

“ My BRETHREN and FRIENDS,

“ I HAVE much sorrow of heart, considering the state
 “ of affairs among us. I am far advanced in life, and labour
 “ under threatening maladies, and know not how soon I
 “ may be taken from you and from this world. As one
 “ drawing near the eternal world—*take heed what you hear.*
 “ The seeds of heresy are sowing and sprouting up among
 “ us, and souls are in danger of being seduced into errors.
 “ There is one, who calls himself John Murray, who has
 “ declared the following things to be his settled opinion—
 “ That the whole human race, every one of Adam’s pos-
 “ terity, have an interest in Christ, and are God’s beloved
 “ ones—That the whole human race, every individual of
 “ mankind, shall finally be saved—That Judas shall sit
 “ upon a throne in the kingdom of Heaven—That at death
 “ the good go into a state of happiness, and the bad into an
 “ intermediate state, to abide there for a certain season, but
 “ shall finally be saved; which, however dressed up in soft
 “ terms and smooth expressions, is the very popish purgatory.
 “ The substance of these things and many other errors
 “ he hath openly avowed, and declared to be his sentiments,
 “ at my house, in the hearing of many witnesses. These
 “ are unscriptural tenets; and, notwithstanding all his per-
 “ verting the holy Scriptures, and wresting and torturing
 “ the word of God, he was not able to produce one plausi-
 “ ble

"ble proof, nor one rational argument, for the support of
 "these pernicious principles. They naturally lead to many
 "other gross errors and popish absurdities, and they are
 "extremely dangerous to the souls of men; they encourage
 "the wicked in their wickedness; for, upon these principles,
 "a man may live and die in sin, and yet go to Heaven,
 "at last; he may get drunk, commit fornication and
 "adultery; he may cheat, and steal, and lie, and indulge
 "all manner of carnal gratifications, and be saved, notwithstanding.
 "But you may say, you do not discover any of these errors in his preaching. Why, others, who
 "have been accounted serious, discerning, judicious men,
 "and whose judgment would heretofore have had some
 "weight in your minds, have discovered them in his public
 "discourses. But however he seems artfully to hide
 "them, your minds are not prepared to receive them; your
 "affections must first be broken off from your ministers,
 "and your minds filled with prejudices against them, by
 "their being reviled and vilified, and your affections set
 "upon *himself*, and you brought to receive the words of
 "his mouth with an implicit faith; then doubtless these
 "dangerous doctrines, and many others, will be inculcated.
 "My brethren and friends, I must caution you to take
 "heed and beware of false teachers. Beware, lest ye be
 "led away by errors, and fall from your steadfastness.
 "Beware of false prophets, concerning whom our blessed
 "Saviour hath warned us, that if it were possible they shall
 "deceive the very elect. SAMUEL CHANDLER."

Glocester, February 3d, 1775.

And after this Mr. Murray continued his preachments
 in a private house, and used every method to touch the
 passions, and sooth the vices of mankind, to gain proselytes
 to his party, till Mr. Chandler died, which was on the 16th
 of March, 1775. The town, from a tender concern for
 the morals of the people, and that they might, if possible,
 preserve peace and good order in the place, took the matter
 up, and sent for this stranger, and inquired of him, who he
 was? what were his credentials? and for what purpose he
 tarried in this place? The town thought they were illy
 treated by him, and resolved pretty unanimously that he
 was a dangerous man, and should be desired to leave the
 town

town in a given time ; but he positively told those who delivered the message to him from the town, that he would not ; and, to prevent his being carried out by an officer, one of his friends made him a freeholder. And as we were then involved in a war with our mother state, and men's passions were agitated and fiery, we thought it not best to carry matters to extremity : and so he continued ; and the separation remained much the same, till we gave Mr. Forbes an invitation to settle with us in the work of the ministry, when the separation made a formal opposition, as appears by their letter to him, which is as follows.—

“ Reverend SIR,

“ *Glocester, April 4th, 1776.*

“ You will have laid before you the votes of the parish,
 “ relative to your settlement ; and as it may be of great
 “ importance to you as well as us, we think it our duty to
 “ address you on the subject.—For many years past,
 “ our trade, and particularly the fishery, by which our chief
 “ dependence is, has greatly declined—that, except a very
 “ few persons, we have been carrying on both trade and
 “ fishery to a very great loss—that many of us have sunk
 “ thousands—that we have large debts out-standing, which
 “ will be entirely lost ; our fishery at present is at an end,
 “ and merchandize very dangerous and precarious ; several
 “ of our vessels taken, others missing ; our tradesmen and
 “ labourers dependent mostly on the trade for their subsist-
 “ ence. Should the publick dispute continue much longer,
 “ our fishery must be entirely ruined, and then of course all
 “ other business must fail here of any consequence, as we
 “ are such a distance from the country, that it will be in
 “ vain to expect any thing therefrom in our trade. We are
 “ greatly in arrears in our taxes of every kind for two years
 “ past—new and heavy ones increasing daily—most of our
 “ people gone—not the least expectation but we shall be
 “ put to the flight again—two or three of our principal
 “ traders left the parish, and more intend it. Some of us
 “ remember the Spanish and French wars at different pe-
 “ riods, with other fore calamities ; but never did our eyes
 “ behold such a gloomy aspect as our affairs wear at this
 “ season. In short, time would fail us to enumerate the many
 “ difficulties that attend us. We are desirous that that
 “ harmony that has subsisted these many years in this parish
 “ may

“ may continue. If you should think proper to give your
 “ voice in the affirmative, it must entirely be at an end,
 “ as we shall be obliged to take such steps as would by no
 “ means be agreeable to you or our brethren; therefore we
 “ thought it our duty to apprise you of this, and hope
 “ your wisdom will direct you to that which will be to your
 “ honour.—We are your most humble servants.”

This letter was signed by ten of those that now form the Association. And as it did not appear by this letter that the opposition was against him, (Mr. Forbes) or that they had any objection to his doctrines or character, but against a re-settlement in general, therefore we thought, and the installing council thought, it would be no bar to his settlement; accordingly, being chosen by a large majority both in the church and parish, and a council being convened by letters missive for that purpose, he was installed, on the fifth of June, 1776, without any opposition, and in as much peace and harmony as could be expected. After this, Mr. Forbes had several conferences with Mr. Murray, and wished to know his true character; but he could not learn it from him or his adherents; and being informed that Dr. Stiles, of Newport, then residing at Portsmouth, and now President of New-Haven college, had the best intelligence, he wrote him on the subject, and had in answer the following.—

“ Rev. Sir,

“ *Portsmouth, Dec. 24, 1777.*

“ Mr. Murray, of whom you ask some account, is one
 “ of those ostentatious, obstinate, but subtle, delusory char-
 “ acters, with which it is best to have little to do. I do
 “ not know that his moral character is directly reprehensi-
 “ ble; but I believe him to be one of the most unprinci-
 “ pled of all men. The most of the little I know of him I
 “ received from his own mouth, and from that little I judge
 “ him a consummate hypocrite: at best, he is a man of du-
 “ plicity and dubiousness of conduct. He is a man of no
 “ education, though he spent a few months with, I think,
 “ a Romanist, who had set up a little academy in Ireland,
 “ when he quarrelled, or seemed to quarrel, with his mas-
 “ ter, and left him abruptly. He was connected with the
 “ Westleians till he was 18; then he quarrelled with and
 “ left them. He so far went over to the Baptists, that he

“ was

“ was rebaptized by immersion, in Ireland, among the
 “ Baptists. From the time he left the Westleians, till just
 “ before he came to America, he connected himself with no
 “ religious society, but followed the trade of a silk weaver,
 “ in London, about 12 years. This business failing, he
 “ meditated coming to America, though with no thoughts
 “ of preaching. Though unused to attend the Tabernacle,
 “ yet he applied to Mr. Whitefield, just before his last
 “ voyage to America, and with his leave he partook of the
 “ Sacrament once at the Tabernacle. This was religious
 “ hypocrisy; for, whatever he was, he was neither a White-
 “ fieldian, nor a Westlean, nor a Baptist.

“ He told me, he did not communicate to Mr. White-
 “ field his intentions of coming to America: but the plan
 “ he had projected, he said, was this—to come here as a
 “ follower of Mr. Whitefield, and here to make himself
 “ known to him, by reminding him of his communicating
 “ at the Tabernacle, and then request of Mr. Whitefield to
 “ put him into some secular employment at the Orphan
 “ House in Georgia; for, he said, he never had preached
 “ in England, and had no thoughts of it here, except that
 “ he had sometimes spoken or exhorted in some of the small
 “ Westlean societies, before he was 18 years old. Upon
 “ coming here, his plan was broken up, as Mr. Whitefield
 “ died a few weeks before or after his arrival. I have been
 “ informed of some of his ludicrous and jocund conversa-
 “ tion, while on the passage, respecting what business he
 “ should follow, here, intimating his readiness to go upon
 “ the stage, or, &c. &c. indicating an undetermined and
 “ an unprincipled adventurer, ready, indifferently, to turn
 “ himself to any course. Being shipwrecked on the Jersey
 “ shore, he was received with hospitality by an opulent
 “ Presbyterian, who had built a meeting-house there for
 “ travelling ministers, especially those sent by the Synods.
 “ Mr. Murray here offered himself first to preach. From
 “ that time to this he has been preaching in different parts,
 “ as you know.

“ There was a society set up in London, about 1765,
 “ which held the principles that Mr. Murray does. I sup-
 “ pose that when Mr. Murray determined to profane the
 “ sacred desk, he recollected and took this society for his
 “ model; resolving to strike, like Sandeman, at all minis-

“ters and churches, and thus render himself noticed; and
 “then choose out a palatable religion for corrupt nature,
 “and so go forth preaching, as he has done, with an unpo-
 “lite and unparalleled effrontery. He adopts the princi-
 “ples of *universal salvation*, but is no ways versed in the
 “writings and arguments upon it, except a pamphlet writer or
 “two, of very small and slender talents. His scheme is short:
 “All are lost, without possibility of self-recovery; and all
 “are saved by Christ’s righteousness and divine love. All
 “texts of Scripture, speaking of love and mercy, he takes
 “literally; those that speak of punishment, both the para-
 “bles and express declarations of Christ, he allegorizes, till
 “he loses his hearers in clouds and delusions of universal
 “happiness. But he is unstudied and undigested in his
 “own scheme—At first he laughed at a literal hell, and
 “denied all future misery—Afterwards he allowed some
 “future punishment, but denies the eternity of it, and goes
 “into the popish doctrine of purgatory. In short, he is to
 “this day unsettled in his scheme—a scheme infinitely dan-
 “gerous to morality. When he visited me, I asked his
 “opinion respecting his supposed tenet of universal salva-
 “tion. But he positively denied it to me, and asserted both
 “the reality and perpetuity of the future misery and damn-
 “ation of those of the human race, who should be found
 “on the left hand of Jesus; and, he said, a number of man-
 “kind would be found on the left hand of Jesus, at the
 “great day. I believed him, for once—though I never
 “asked him to preach in my pulpit, where he had preached
 “repeatedly, in my absence. But he went no further than
 “Narraganset, and preached directly contrary; and at East-
 “Greenwich, in conversation, he denied a hell—not only a
 “local hell, but that there was any state of misery after
 “death. And it is said that once after supper he talked
 “ludicrously of the Lord’s supper, as being only like
 “drinking a health unto the memory of an absent friend;
 “and profanely said, Here is bread, and here is wine—what
 “forbids but we should have it now? One of the company
 “replied, Several things forbid it: in order to a due par-
 “taking or administering of that holy ordinance, there were
 “two things necessary, viz. proper subjects, and a proper
 “person to administer it; neither of which, says he, do I
 “know to be here. Murray replied, They were fit sub-
 “jects,

"jects, and he, or any other person, had power, &c.—and
 "so it ended. Mr. Murray denies all this, with certain
 "artful duplicity or coverings: but I had it from the mouth
 "of one of the gentlemen present, and do not doubt the
 "fact. Indeed, it is said by others, that now he talks
 "lightly about outward ordinances. When he was at
 "Newport, he went to the Quakers' meeting there, when
 "he rose and spoke, and personated the Quaker preacher,
 "to the universal disgust of the *Friends* and all others, even
 "his best admirers, sundry of whom I heard pronounce it
 "hypocrisy. Some men of his sentiments may be reasoned
 "with; some cannot: he is one of those with whom it is
 "vain to reason.—I rather consider him as a Romanist
 "in disguise, endeavouring to excite confusion in our
 "churches. But I can easily see he is the meteor of the
 "night only; like S—d—n or G—r—n, he and his disci-
 "ples will soon vanish; though we must expect others to
 "rise up, till the second coming of Christ.—Let us not
 "be distressed—Let us testify the truth with firmness, and
 "leave the church to the care of Jesus.

"I am, fir, your brother,

"EZRA STILES.

"P. S. In his politicks he has been at first an Anti-
 "American, then for us, and now against us, and for
 "reconciliation, &c."

This letter Mr. Forbes communicated to Mr. Murray,
 and, by the Doctor's leave, gave him an attested copy, at
 which he appeared much offended, and said that he would
 prove to the world that it was a false and injurious aspersi-
 on, and made for a while a bustle, and did nothing; so his
 character with us remains just in that point of light in which
 the Doctor gave it.

In the Preface (dated Boston, Aug. 1782) to the Pam-
 phlet entitled, "Salvation for all Men," is the following
 paragraph:

"—The doctrine of *Universal Salvation* has, in this and
 "some other towns, been held forth by a stranger, who has,
 "of himself, assumed the character of a *preacher*, in direct
 "contradiction not only to all the before mentioned writers,
 "but to the *whole tenour of the New-Testament books*, from
 "their beginning to their end. According to this *preacher*,

“ a man may go to Heaven, notwithstanding all the sins he
 “ has been guilty of in the course of his life. Such a doctrine
 “ looks very like an *encouragement to libertinism*, and falls
 “ in with the scheme of too many in this degenerate age,
 “ who, under pretence of *promoting religion*, *undermine it at*
 “ *the very root*. It is certainly fitted to this end, and has
 “ already had this effect upon many, especially of our
 “ younger people, who, by means of it, have lost all sense
 “ of religion, and given themselves up to the most criminal
 “ excesses ! If this kind of preaching is encouraged, it may
 “ prove as hurtful to *civil society* as to *religion*.”

As there were a number in this separation, who were members of our church in full standing, who had forsaken our worship and communion to follow this stranger, without giving any reasons for their so doing, we thought it our duty to inquire into the reasons of their conduct—therefore appointed a church meeting for that purpose ; but they did not attend. We then adjourned the meeting, and wrote to them severally, desiring them to give us their reasons, if any they had, why they absented themselves from the worship of God, and our communion ; but they refused to meet with, or to give us any reasons for their conduct. We wrote them again, as a church, in the most pacifick manner, praying them, if they had any matters of grievance, they would make them known ; or if they were of such a nature as that they were not willing that we should judge of them, that they would propose some method in which the grievance might be removed, or an accommodation take place ; or we were ready to submit the matter to the judgment of a council of church members, mutually chosen for that purpose ; and we would submit our whole conduct to the inspection and determination of the same :—so we did every thing in our power to satisfy or recover our deserting and separating members, as will abundantly appear by the church records.

But this, and every other method we could adopt, they treated with silent contempt. Yet we have ever treated them in the most lenient manner. But the outcry is, they are oppressed, because they are taxed in common for the payment of parish charges. But we think, that as they have never been incorporated by any order or authority known in this commonwealth,

monwealth, nor at any time laid before us as a parish any reasons why they should be exempted, we cannot levy a lawful tax without including them. And we have born with them from year to year; and when any of our collectors have called upon them for their proportion of taxes, they have treated them ill, and sometimes have threatened their lives; and we forebore still. At length they agreed that we should distrain on some of their party, and then they would try it out in the law: and as we saw no other way to have the matter issued, we agreed to the measure, however disagreeable it was for us to enter into the law; and we distrained on the goods of four of their number, named by them, and sold them at publick auction, and paid their tax, and tendered them the overplus; but they would not receive it, but cried out of oppression and injury, though it was a proposal of their own, to which we agreed only to bring the matter to an issue. They then endeavoured to recover their goods by a writ of *Replevin*, but failed; then they sued the assessors, and harassed us in the law for several years, without suffering their case to come to a trial; then they withdrew their case, as not being tenable. And now their teacher, without a character, credentials or ordination, has assumed the character of a publick teacher of piety, religion and morality, styles himself *clerk*, and sued the parish for that money which had been taken from his friends by distraint; and after many unnecessary delays it came to a hearing before the Supreme Judicial Court, at their last session, in Ipswich, when a jury, in opposition to the whole court, and to the surprize of all parties, brought in a verdict partly in their favour; notwithstanding which, Mr. Murray has reviewed, and served us with his writ, though we had reviewed at the time of trial. Thus, while he affects to keep up an air of importance, he is determined to give us all the trouble he possibly can.

This is a concise and impartial relation of facts as they took place, and gave rise to that Association who now stile themselves Christian Independents.

We pass, **SECONDLY**, to make a few Remarks upon their Appeal.

1st. WE cannot but remark upon the unheard-of name which they have assumed—*Christian Independents*!—A solecism

cism in nature ! and when assumed by a society in confederate states, it implies treason ! In a civil or political view, it is at best imperium in imperio, which involves in it a contradiction : and if we consider it in a religious or ecclesiastical view, it is absurd : an independent church must either be the whole church of Christ, or it must be a particular part detached from the body catholick ; but an independent part, or member of the body universal, is a contradiction ; for one member " cannot say to the other, I have no need of thee." The Christian church is every where considered as consisting of confederating members, uniting in Christ the head, and holding communion with each other in the doctrines and institutions of Christ. But this Association holds no communion with any church on earth, in the doctrines and ordinances of Christ. They deny the morality of the Christian Sabbath, explode and ridicule the institutions of baptism and the Lord's supper. What claim can they have then to the Christian name, while they deny and disuse the distinguishing ordinances of Christianity ?

Having remarked this upon the title page, we pass to take some notice of their Appeal.

And they introduce themselves with saying, " We should be far from giving our countrymen the trouble of attending to an appeal, had we not been drawn before a civil tribunal, in defence of what we suppose to be our just, invaluable and constitutional rights." To which we would only reply, It was not we, but they, who commenced and recommenced the lawsuit, and are now first in serving us with their writ of review ; so that it was not we who drew them, but they *us*, before a civil tribunal, in defence of what we call our just and constitutional rights. In their fourth page they seem to think they have some special claim to the favour of their country, from their not " shewing any backwardness in the late war." We are sorry that we are obliged to say, this is a misrepresentation of real facts ; for though some of them have shown a becoming zeal for the rights and safety of their country, yet it is a well known fact, that all who were unfriendly to the American cause here, were in this separation. It is also a known fact, that their teacher was admired most by those that were most unfriendly to the American cause, not only in this town, but through this commonwealth ;

commonwealth; and several who are of this Association would do nothing in defence of the cause, but by constraint. Little reason then have they to boast on this head, or claim the favour of their country as her favourite sons; especially since they have a man for their leader, who is himself a foreigner, and has ever been the idol of Tories, and often been closeted by the rankest of that tribe, in other places as well as in this.

They say, also, in the same page, "When Mr. Murray, our present teacher in religious matters, had been invited to preach in the meeting-house, we heard him with increasing pleasure and a growing satisfaction." This also is a misrepresentation. Many of those who now form the Association were then his greatest opposers; and those who were his first admirers, and who were chiefly concerned in introducing him into the pulpit, soon discovered his jesuitical designs, and were the foremost in endeavouring his removal hence. In the same page, also, they say, "On the settlement of Mr. Forbes, being obliged to withhold our assent to the doctrines he taught, disagreed to his settlement." This is, we think, a falsehood; which sufficiently appears from their own letter sent to Mr. Forbes, and communicated by him to the parish.* This letter was sent as containing their objections; but there is not a word in it which intimated that they could not assent to his doctrines. The only ostensible ground of their objection then was, the then present war, and the circumstances of the parish. Nay, upon being asked, they said, "they had no objection to Mr. Forbes—they were willing to be their proportion in hiring him for a supply; and if we must settle, they were as willing he should be the man as any body." For them now to say, that they could not assent to his doctrines, and therefore disagreed to his settlement, bears too great a resemblance to a falsehood. We wished then, and do now wish, to put the best construction upon this mystical part of conduct; and we appeal to the publick to say whether this does not look as if they had formed a design to make a breach in this (till then peaceful) society, and made use of this stranger as a fit tool to carry into execution their malignant design. †

We leave now our dissenting brethren to contend with
Constantius,

* Page 7. † See the closing sentence of their letter to Mr. Forbes, p. 8.

Constantius, Theodosius, and to define in the school of Plato the Homoiouision as they please ; or to dispute with their old friend the *British monarch* for the title *defender of the faith*, &c. and to make their own strictures upon the conduct of the first settlers of this commonwealth. Yet we cannot but observe, in their 13th page, how unfairly they speak of their distinguishing character. They say, " We distinguish ourselves from the church under the instruction of Mr. Forbes, in our not using baptism as an external rite, and also in our mode of discipline, being Independents." Whereas the truth is, they are totally distinguished from us, and from all the churches in this commonwealth, by their being no church at all, not being incorporated by any order or authority known in this commonwealth ; but a mere jumble of detached members, some of which, in the most irregular manner, separated themselves, without cause, from the first church in Gloucester, and who have obstinately continued in their separation, against all reasoning, remonstrating and persuasion—deaf to all the most pacifick proposals made on the part of the church from whom they separated ; and their Association is made up partly from other parishes, and partly of foreigners, and some of the most abandoned characters ; in short, any body and any thing, whom they could by persuasion or pecuniary consideration hire into their service. We are sorry to say this, but are constrained to do it in our own defence, and in honour to the church ; for we think it the highest dishonour to the church of Christ for such a heterogeneous body to call themselves a church, distinguished only from the other churches in this land by the external rite of baptism, and the mode of discipline. This would naturally lead the impartial publick to conclude that they were a set of sober Christians, of tender consciences, distinguished from their brethren only in a few non-essential modes that were merely external : whereas they have not one single feature of a church of Christ, or any mode of discipline, that we can discern, among them. They resemble Nebuchadnezzar's image as much as any thing we can think of, which was made of gold, silver, brass, iron and clay, and was broken to pieces by a stone cast out of the mountain without hands, and all become like the chaff of the summer threshing floor : for some of their members sustain fair moral characters, yet
not

not without a strong tinge of enthusiasm. But they ask "why the Quakers should meet with the smiles of government, and they not have the favours of the state?" We answer, they are a sect made up of peaceable, honest people, who speak the truth, and should, therefore, and will, meet the smiles of government; while those of a contrary character may expect their frowns. But they say, 14th page, "Notwithstanding this, we have been, and are still, taxed to the support of Mr. Forbes, and our property is taken and exposed at auction, to raise money for the support of a form of worship in which we can never join." There they have in part told the truth; but they hold the truth in unrighteousness, for they seem not to love the truth in her naked simplicity. The simple truth is this: They have been and still are taxed in common with the other members of our parish to raise money to defray parish charges, (some part of which is appropriated to the support of public worship) all which they have constantly refused to pay: and though they pretend to ground that refusal upon the Constitution, yet they equally refuse to pay that which was levied before the Constitution took place, and have repeatedly sued us for taxes levied upon them to pay the necessary and contingent charges of the parish, as well as for that which is appropriated to the support of public worship—"a form, in which (they say) they can never join." Why? When any have resided for a while in neighbouring towns, they have attended and joined with the people where they resided: and some of those who were first in the separation, and now form the Association, being members of our church, have partook of the sacrament of the Lord's supper in other churches; joining with them not only in public worship, but in the holy communion; though they had the same form of worship as ours, and in full communion with our church: so that their cannot must be their will not; and because they will not, conscience is not concerned here.

In page 16th, they seem to be concerned for their minister, lest they should not be able to prove that he is a preacher of piety, religion and morality: they had rather the question should be waved; but if decided at all, they think it ought to be from his urging his hearers to the practice of morality. We beg leave to ask—Can a man,

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who publickly discards the doctrine of God's moral government—of future rewards and punishments—urge, with a good face, or with any hope of success, the practice of morality? Can he, consistently, preach up morality, when he at the same time saps its very foundation, and cuts the nerves of Christian piety, by blending all characters together, and by making all equally holy, because equally united to Christ in his incarnation? But here our brethren tremble for their minister, and would fain shelter him under the cloaks of the learned Doctors Chauncy and Priestley, who, they say, believe that there is a temporary hell for the ungodly—and why may not their unlearned teacher believe there is no hell prepared for any body but the poor devils, and yet be in law a good preacher of piety, religion and morality? But those learned men will shake him from their skirts as a corrupting leprosy, if we may believe Doctor Chauncy's own words, in his preface to his book of extracts.

We do not know how our brethren come to blunder upon that gross mistake, "that God, in his civil constitution he was pleased to form for the Jews, never in any one instance gave intimation that the Jews should be punished in another world for their crimes committed in this": we charitably believe that it was owing to their being implicitly led by one who is totally ignorant of the original languages, the nature and designs of the Sinai covenant. Without quoting those passages from Moses and the prophets, which would evince the contrary, (for we are no textuaries) we refer them to the apostle to the Hebrews, who considered the rest of the earthly Canaan as typical of the rest of the heavenly; and as unbelief and disobedience excluded the Jews from the earthly, so they would from the heavenly. But we are not so much surprized at this, as we are at the indignity which they obliquely cast upon Christ himself; when, in page 18th, they say, "It was not till the Christian church was illegally wedded to state policy, that men in power dared to hurl the thunders of the Most High at those who offended against government." We disapprove of the terms, (though borrowed without credit) yet more of the sentiments couched under those sonorous terms. We take it, both from this sentence, and from what they said above, that it is their opinion, that it was not till Christ came a preacher of the everlasting gospel, that men were

were threatened with punishments in another world for crimes committed in this ; that this is a doctrine peculiar to Christ and his apostles, and so from them has been preached up, and handed down, to this day, by those who knew no better. It is certain, Christ opened his ministry by preaching up the doctrine of future rewards and punishments ; but our brethren say, " this was not done till the Christian church was illegally wedded to state policy." The Christian church was formed by Christ : she took her name from him, and was so far wedded to state policy as that he made " kings and queens nursing fathers and mothers ;" & made the " earth to help the woman." This marriage they call illegal, and implicitly charge it upon Christ ; but they dare not speak it out. It was not till then, they say, that offences against government were threatened with future punishment. All immoralities are offences against government, against God's moral government, and every form which he has ordained for men : and all immoralities, without repentance, and a believing application to Christ, have been, ever since the Christian era, threatened with future punishments. The truth of the matter is this,—the doctrines of their teacher do not correspond with those of Christ and his apostles ; yet they want to make it out, that he is a teacher of piety, religion and morality.

We pass over all the arguments which they deduce from the various denominations which unhappily divide the Christian name, as being futile and inconclusive ; yet cannot but observe how inconsistent they are with themselves, when they say, 20th page, that " we suppose every *good man*, let his involuntary errors be what they may, will be in the favour of God." So they suppose it consistent, that every bad man, be his involuntary errors what they may, is and will be in favour with God. But where is the sense of talking of good men or bad men, when with them all characters are alike ?

We cannot close our remarks, without observing, that towards the close of their Appeal they address the publick under the endearing character of *fellow-citizens*. This, we suppose, they adopt as a conciliating term, without meaning : for an independent *fellow-citizen* is an animal we have no name for, and involves so many contradictions as confounds all ideas.

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We pass over to their Association, 36th page—And we suppose that we look on it as the impartial publick does—*a mere farce*: for there they speak of an election—"God's choosing in every age a select number for himself"; whereas they deny all elections:—and to this chosen body God reveals "his secret," of which all the world beside are ignorant:—and then, in a kind of transport, they conceive themselves these favourites:—"We the subscribers, greatly affected with the divine goodness in thus distinguishing *us*, think it our interest and bounden duty, to let our lights shine before men," &c.—and we think so too.—But their good works are, like their revelations, a profound secret.

But they say, "it hath pleased God to make us acquainted with the voice of the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ." And we ask, Hath it not pleased God to make us also acquainted with his voice? His word of salvation is sent unto us, as well as unto them. But they say, We cannot follow a stranger, or give attention to those who are not acquainted with the Saviour: and yet "they have loved strangers, and after them they will go"; while they forsake and desert those, whose soundness of doctrines and piety of life have long demonstrated that they have been with Jesus, forming their sentiments from his doctrines, and their lives from his examples: for, besides their present teacher, who is a stranger in every sense of the word, they have in his train a *Tyler*, who (by report) is a Tory Episcopalian—a *Wright*, who is a German Moravian—with an illiterate *Townsend*, *Streeter*, *Parker*, a duplicate of *Winchesters*, &c. &c.—A goodly band indeed! With such strolling mendicants this town has been infested ever since this Association has been formed; which has kept us in one continual hubbub, to the obstructing business, the corrupting the morals, of youth especially, and the total destruction of peace and harmony.

But they say, "We resolve, by the grace of God, we will avoid, as much as possible, vain jangling and unnecessary disputation, &c." and yet the very reverse has been their constant practice, especially with those who have the greatest influence. Such is their rage for proselyting, that they are forever disputing, and using every art of fascination; and upon those whom they cannot gain to their party by these means,

means, they try the force of interest, promising those that come into town to seek employment, that they will put them into business, promising them constant employment, if they will go to their meeting; and threatening others, who are already in their employ, that they will turn them out, unless they will be of their party: so that some, who have no affection for their system, attend their meeting sometimes, lest they and their families should want bread. And they say, "We mutually agree to receive as our minister, id est, as our servant, friend and Christian brother, Mr. John Murray, from a full conviction, that the same God, who sent the first ministers of Jesus Christ, sent him." So we say, the same God, who sent the spirit of truth into the mouths of his prophets Elijah and Micaiah, whom Ahab hated, because they did not soothe him in his vices, sent a lying spirit into the mouth of all his false prophets, for his punishment: and we believe the same Jesus, who sent forth his seventy disciples to preach the gospel of truth, sent also a legion of devils into the herd of swine, for the punishment of those who would not receive him and his gospel: and we believe this enemy of peace and righteousness was, by the permissive providence of God, sent among us, in sheep's clothing, for our trial, if not for our punishment, for abusing the gospel which has been so clearly and faithfully preached among us for a century past.—And they say, "we cordially receive him as a messenger sent from God"; and we have no right to dispute it, since some of the more sanguine among them make no scruple to say, "that they believe all that he says and does is from the immediate inspiration of the Holy Ghost," and that "he has a commission to baptize with the Holy Ghost."—And this association, they say, was signed by all the society. But that we deny.

We close with a short address to the impartial publick.

FELLOW-CITIZENS,

You may think yourselves less in danger, from the standard of impiety being erected in this small peninsula of Cape-Ann: but the ill consequences may be sooner and more sensibly felt, by you, than you are aware of. If this Association should be adopted, and this artful deceiver supported by law, we may expect that an hundred similar associations

ciations will soon be formed, and as many mushroom teachers spring up from the feculency of vice and laziness, to take the lead of them, to the discouragement of all science and erudition, the destruction of peace and order, which will soon precipitate these infant free States into anarchy and confusion. We speak feelingly, from experience. This town, once the seat of peace and commerce, is now nodding on the brink of ruin, owing chiefly, if not entirely, to this Association, headed by this foreigner, who, through a too great indulgence, has acquired the effrontery to claim equal privileges with the learned, regular and ordained ministers of this commonwealth: assuming their title, he sues for support. If this Association should be supported by law, then any one, two or three families may form themselves into the same, and claim the same privileges. What then will become of our colleges, incorporated parishes and churches?—All crumbled into parties, and buried in ignorance and superstition, we shall be left, too late, and with more reason, to weep, with the Roman orator, O tempora! O mores! What can we expect, when a system is defended and supported by law, which destroys both the solemnity and validity of an oath, which are predicated upon the certain future punishment of perjury? What safety, either of our persons or our property, can we expect? Nay, may we not expect frequently to see Beadle's tragedy acted over again—suicide and murders committed from pure benevolence?—And what will become of our youth? Their natures already viciated—their morals corrupted by this wretched system of licentiousness—their opening minds uncultivated with erudition, and unimpressed with virtuous principles—they will enter the stage, after us, ignorant and vicious; and, under the direction of the wild-fire of enthusiasm, will soon be swallowed up in the vortex of superstition. You may say, this is only the uncertain flights of fancy—No, fellow-citizens, no—We feel it, we realize it, every day; and it is the opinion of the most judicious and feeling hearts among us, that this man, and his pernicious doctrines, have been more damage to this town, than the late war; for while this destroyed our interest, those have corrupted our morals in their first principles—broke up our peace, and deeply sowed the seeds of fell discord among us; our trade interrupted by a party spirit—our churches rent
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by divisions; nothing can be done in town-meeting, but through strife and unfair dealings; and the offices of benevolence cease, or are confined to a party: and the contagious influence of this system has been sensibly felt in other towns through this and the neighbouring states.

But we feel most sensibly for the rising generation—Therefore, fellow-citizens, call your children around you, fold them in your arms, and ask your own hearts—Are you willing that these pieces of yourselves should be formed into such an Association, and have such a teacher for their guide? Or, in other words, Are you willing that knowledge, virtue and religion should die in the hands of your children?—And as ye would it should be done to and for you and them, so do ye for us and ours.—Consider of it—take advice—and speak your minds.

PUBLISHED by a Number of the Inhabitants of the first
Parish in Gloucester—October, 1785.



1. The first part of the paper is devoted to a
description of the various species of the
genus, and to a comparison of the
characters of the different species.
The second part of the paper is devoted to a
description of the various species of the
genus, and to a comparison of the
characters of the different species.
The third part of the paper is devoted to a
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The fourth part of the paper is devoted to a
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genus, and to a comparison of the
characters of the different species.
The fifth part of the paper is devoted to a
description of the various species of the
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